

LOXIA CYANEA LINNAEUS, 1758 (AVES): PROPOSED
INVALIDATION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS, IN ORDER TO
CONSERVE TANAGRA CYANEA LINNAEUS, 1766.
Z.N.(S.) 1929

By Eugene Eisenmann (*American Museum of Natural History; Chairman American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature*), Raymond A. Paynter, Jr. (*Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University; Editor, "Check-lists of Birds of the World"*), and Charles Vaurie (*American Museum of Natural History; Chairman, Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature of the International Ornithological Congress*).

1. This application is designed to preserve the name of the Indigo Bunting, currently known as *Passerina cyanea* (Linnaeus, 1766), one of the best known species of breeding North American birds, whose winter range extends to northern South America. The reason for the proposed invalidation of the earlier name *Loxia cyanea* Linnaeus, 1758, which has heretofore been used for the South American Ultramarine Grosbeak in the combination *Cyanocompsa cyanea*, is that one of the applicants proposes for the first time to merge the genus *Cyanocompsa* in the genus *Passerina* in the forthcoming Volume 13 of Peters' "Check-List of Birds of the World"—expected to appear some time in 1970. Unless the Commission acts, such a merger would require the transfer of the binomen *Passerina cyanea* from the Indigo Bunting to the Ultramarine Grosbeak, a little known species. This would not only be destructive of stability but would create great confusion with regard to the past literature (which is enormous for the Indigo Bunting). The transfer would continue to cause confusion indefinitely, because under the International Code zoologists who do not agree with the merger will continue to use *Passerina cyanea* for the Indigo Bunting, while, at the same time, those who support the merger will use the same name for the other species.

2. The applicants, while not in accord on the taxonomic question, agree that the nomenclatural impasse can only be avoided by application of the plenary powers so as to preserve the current usage of *Passerina cyanea* for the Indigo Bunting (Code, Arts. 5, 79, 80).

The first named applicant, Eisenmann, is Chairman of the American Ornithologists' Union Committee on Classification and Nomenclature, which is charged with the preparation of the periodically published "A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds". This work, of which five editions have already appeared, is the basis used by most zoologists for nomenclature of North American birds. The name *Passerina cyanea* has been used for the Indigo Bunting from at least as early as the first A.O.U. Check-list, 1886, and in all the recent editions of the Check-list, including the latest, 1957. The same binomen is also used in *all* current literature. Literally hundreds of publications have employed this name for the Indigo Bunting. The second applicant, Paynter, is Editor of the "Check-List of Birds of the World", begun by the late James L. Peters, and is the author of the section on Cardinalinae (soon to be published)

in which the Indigo Bunting and the Ultramarine Grosbeak are included. The third applicant, Vaurie, is Chairman of the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature of the International Ornithological Congress. This Committee has an established policy to maintain well-established usage in nomenclature.

3. *Tanagra cyanea* Linnaeus (1766, *Syst. Nat.* (12th ed.): 315) is based on "The blue Linnet" of Catesby (*Nat. Hist. Carolina*, 1 : 45, pl. 45), which indubitably applies to the Indigo Bunting. Linnaeus' specific name *cyanea* has been consistently employed for this species in all the literature. The only synonym appears to be *Emberiza cyanella* Sparrman (1787, *Museum Carls.* Fasc. 2, plates 42, 43), apparently never used again, based on an immature male, according to Gyldenstolpe (1926, *Ark. Zool.* 19, A (1) : 21). The Indigo Bunting has been known by the binomen *Passerina cyanea* since the 19th Century (see 1886, *A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds*), and universally since 1910. In the intervening period the binomen *Cyanospiza cyanea* was used by some authors. Both the genera *Passerina* Vieillot (1816, *Analyse Nouv. Orn. Elém.* : 30) and *Cyanospiza* Baird (1858, *Rept. Expl. Surv. R.R. Pacific*, 9 : 500) have as their type species *Tanagra cyanea* Linnaeus, 1766.

4. The South American Ultramarine Grosbeak (sometimes called Brazilian Blue Grosbeak) is currently known in the literature as *Cyanocompsa cyanea* (e.g., 1966, R. M. de Schauensee, *Species of Birds of South America*: 504). The specific name is based on *Loxia cyanea* Linnaeus (1758, *Syst. Nat.* (10th ed.): 174), which was based on "The Blue Grosbeak" of Edwards (*Nat. Hist. Birds*, 3 : 125, pl. 125, "coast of Angola, in Africa"). The plate strongly suggests the South American Ultramarine Grosbeak, rather than any African bird, and the name has long been applied to the South American species. While the provenance of the type specimen (which no longer exists) is unknown, there has been general acceptance of the view adopted by Todd (1923, *Auk*, 40 : 65) restricting this name to the northern Brazilian population, with type locality Bahia. In practically all literature since 1907 this species has been placed in the genus *Cyanocompsa* (1851, Cabanis, *J. Orn.*, 9 : 4), although it was at one time included in the genus *Guiraca*. The species has never been included in the genus *Passerina*, nor been regarded hitherto as congeneric with *Passerina cyanea*, the Indigo Bunting. For the Ultramarine Grosbeak there is a junior synonym available, *Fringilla brissonii* Lichtenstein (1823, *Verz. Doubl. Berliner Mus.* : 22) based on *Loxia caerulea* var. β Gmelin (1789, *Syst. Nat.*, 1 (2) : 863), which, in turn, rests upon "Le Bouvreuil blue de Brésil" of Brisson (*Orn.*, 3 : 231, pl. 17, fig. 2, Brésil). This name was used by Wied (1830, *Beitr. Naturg. Bras.*, 3 (1) : 561) for the form from Bahia. The applicability of the name *brissonii* to the species is clear, but there is no longer any means of determining on which Brazilian subspecies it was based. However its use for the Bahia population of the Ultramarine Grosbeak both by Wied and, as a synonym of *Cyanocompsa c. cyanea*, by Hellmayr (1938, *Field Mus. Nat. Hist. Zool.*, Ser. 13, Part 2 : 103) justifies restricting it to the race found in Bahia, the same locality to which Linnaeus' name *Loxia cyanea*, 1758, has been restricted. Thus if the Linnaean name is invalidated, the Lichtenstein name will be available for use for the same form, and, as it is earlier than any other name for any race

of this species, it would become the valid specific name for the Ultramarine Grosbeak. The name is not unknown, since it is included in Hellmayr's standard "Catalogue of Birds of the Americas" (1938, *op. cit.*) and will be included in the forthcoming volume of Peters' "Check-list of Birds of the World".

5. Paynter in Volume 13 of the "Check-List of Birds of the World" will merge *Cyanocompsa* in the genus *Passerina*. Unless the plenary powers are invoked to preserve the well-established name *Passerina cyanea* for the Indigo Bunting, that combination will have to be transferred to the Ultramarine Grosbeak.

All the applicants believe such transfer to be both confusing and destructive of stability and universality of usage. This is particularly true because some ornithologists (for example, the applicant Eisenmann) do not consider the two genera sufficiently close for merger.¹ Under the Code, Art. 59(c), zoologists not considering the genera congeneric would properly continue to employ *Passerina cyanea* for the Indigo Bunting, while those accepting the merger would use the identical binomen for the Ultramarine Grosbeak,—species which in some localities may occur together. The best way of preventing this unfortunate result is by exercise of the plenary powers to invalidate the earlier Linnaean name of 1758 (applicable to the much less well-known species), thus ensuring that the name is maintained for the Indigo Bunting, and that the specific name, *brissonii* Lichtenstein, is applied to the Ultramarine Grosbeak regardless of the genus in which it is placed.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature accordingly is requested:

- (a) to use its plenary powers to suppress for purposes of both the Law of Priority and the Law of Homonymy the specific name *cyanea*, as originally published in the binomen *Loxia cyanea* Linnaeus (1758, *Syst. Nat.* (10th ed.): 174);
- (b) to fix the type locality of *Fringilla brissonii* Lichtenstein (1823, *Verz. Doubl. Berliner Mus.*: 22) as Bahia, Brazil;
- (c) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology the binomen *Loxia cyanea* Linnaeus, 1758;
- (d) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the specific name *cyanea* as originally published in the binomen *Tanagra cyanea* Linnaeus, 1766.

¹The applicant Vaurie prefers not to express an opinion on the taxonomic situation, but feels that there is clear need for nomenclatural action.